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HANDBOOK FOR
BUSINESS
LETTER WRITERS

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BONNEY AND COLE



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HANDBOOK FOR BUSINESS LETTER WRITERS

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INTRODUCTION

What good eyeglasses are to the eyes, good English is to the mind. As good eyeglasses enable the eyes really to see the printed page that lies before them, so good English enables the mind to understand easily and clearly the thought that page is intended to express.

Success in a competitive business is the outcome not only of ambition and hard work but of full and painstaking preparation. One should learn the meaning of words. One should develop the ability to write English that will exactly express his thoughts. Many a good business plan has failed of adoption because of misunderstandings that arose from the awkward and obscure language in which it was written. I have learned this through bitter experience.

It is worth while to give oneself a real chance to succeed by getting a thorough preparation for business. Without this preparation, one's letters and business plans are likely to confuse even those who understood the subject in the beginning. With this preparation, one can bring the entire power of his mind to bear in presenting his ideas to his business associates. This book will teach young people to handle intelligently those essential tools of business, words and sentences. Therefore, I am interested in it and recommend it.

EDWARD A. FILENE

CONTENTS

	PAGE
WHY BOTHER? A FOREWORD	1
FORM OF THE LETTER:	
Appearance of the Letter.....	2
Correct Forms for Headings, Introductions and Conclusions.....	3
Titles.....	7
Correct Salutations.....	10
Conclusions.....	11
Additional Forms.....	14
THE LETTER ITSELF:	
The Sentence.....	15
The Paragraph.....	19
DICTION:	
Common Errors.....	23
Business Phrases.....	29
GRAMMAR:	
Verbs.....	31
Pronouns.....	33
Prepositions and Conjunctions.....	37
Adverbs and Adjectives.....	38
PUNCTUATION:	
The Period.....	40
The Capital.....	40
The Comma.....	42
The Semicolon.....	43
The Colon.....	44

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Hyphen.....	45
The Apostrophe.....	46
Quotation Marks.....	47
NUMBERS.....	50
ABBREVIATIONS.....	51
SPELLING.....	54
SYLLABICATION.....	55
TYPES OF LETTERS:	
The Letter of Inquiry.....	57
Answer to Inquiry or Request.....	58
Order Letter.....	60
Acknowledgment of Order.....	64
Notice of Shipment.....	67
Letter of Claim.....	68
Letter of Adjustment.....	72
Collection Letters.....	75
The Letter of Application.....	81
Sales Letters.....	84
Letters — Incorrect and Correct.....	88
TELEGRAMS.....	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	90
INDEX.....	93

HANDBOOK FOR BUSINESS LETTER WRITERS

WHY BOTHER?

"Why bother over all those tiny details? Why be so fussy?"

Well, why?

Why not use an inch margin all the time? Why bother with a two-inch one? Why try to keep the right-hand margin even? Why "block" a letter consistently? Why write out words that might be abbreviated? Why list items? Why trouble to look up the spelling or the meaning of a word in the dictionary, when your reader will probably guess what you mean, anyway? Why bother?

It is worth while "bothering" to make a friend, isn't it? That is what letters do, make friends or enemies; or what is worse, they result in deadly indifference.

The letter that makes a friend is attractive in appearance, clean, framed in a white margin, consistently planned. It is simple and clear in its meaning, just as the speech of a friend is simple and easy to understand, with no hidden thoughts, no statements with double meanings, no formal phrases that repel. Such a letter is as friendly as its author, genuinely desiring to help the one who receives it. So the "I" is left out of its vocabulary, just as it is out of that of the popular girl. "You" is the one of whom the writer thinks.

This letter gives pleasure to the man who dictates its clear-cut, friendly words; to the girl who transcribes it correctly and intelligently, typing it with the care that an artist uses; and to the person who enjoys reading it from the "Dear Sir" to the "Very truly yours."

FORM OF THE LETTER

APPEARANCE OF THE LETTER

Paper. Practically all business letters are written on commercial size paper, $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 inches. The best houses use a good quality of white bond paper. In correspondence within an organization colored papers are sometimes used to represent different departments.

Arrangement on the Paper. The arrangement of the letter on the paper is most important. The stenographer should always plan the "layout" of her letter as carefully as an advertising man does his copy, with the idea of creating a good first impression. Her letters should be "well-framed" in white space, with a one-inch margin for long letters, a two-inch or wider margin, for short letters. Her right-hand margin should be almost as clearly-cut as her left.

Ordinarily the letter should be single spaced, with double spacing between date and salutation, between salutation and body, between the paragraphs themselves, and between the body and conclusion. In very short letters, double spacing may be used throughout. Paragraphs may be indented or blocked, as the stenographer's taste or as the policy of the house dictates. It is correct to indent paragraphs even if the block form is used elsewhere.

The conclusion should be centered.

One page letters are preferred to longer ones, unless the letter is from a close associate and written on a subject in which the recipient has a keen interest. Usually all pages after the first one are written on sheets with no letterhead.

CORRECT FORMS FOR HEADINGS, INTRODUCTIONS
AND CONCLUSIONS

Stationery with No Letterhead. In the best houses two types of arrangement are used, block and indentation; and two of punctuation, open and closed. Usually the block arrangement is used in combination with open punctuation; the indentation, with closed.

The more conservative business houses and professional offices still employ the indentation form, but the majority of them today use the block form.

Examples:**BLOCK — OPEN**

140 North Jefferson Street
Cleveland, Ohio
February 18, 1922

Messrs. Brown & Robie
140 East Market Street
Portland, Oregon

Gentlemen:

Very truly yours

INDENTATION — CLOSED

140 North Jefferson Street,
Cleveland, Ohio,
February 18, 1922.

Messrs. Brown & Robie,
140 East Market Street,
Portland, Oregon.

Gentlemen:

Very truly yours,

Stationery with Letterhead. The date should be placed midway between the introduction and the letterhead, and to the right far enough to reach the margin. Stationery which provides a dotted line for the date, following the name of the place,

New York, N. Y.....

is rapidly going out of use.

Examples:

December 27, 1921

Messrs. Brown and Robbins
48 West Broadway
New York, N.Y.

Gentlemen:

Very truly yours

There are several other forms of arranging the date. The following have met with most approval:

October	May First	11 October, 1921
Fifteenth	1 9 2 1	
Nineteen		
Twenty-one		

Special Forms. Lawyers, doctors, architects and executives, in correspondence with their clients or business

associates of long standing often employ the following form:

My dear Mr. Maxon,

Yours very sincerely,

Mr. James Maxon,
21 South Bridge Street,
Buffalo, New York.

An official letter is one written to a prominent person on a matter of general or public, rather than business, interest. The following form is used:

431 West 12 Street
Chicago, Illinois
December 21, 1921

Sir:

Respectfully yours

Honorable William Robinson
The Senate
Washington, D.C.

Cautions. 1. Do not abbreviate anything except the state; the titles Mr., Mrs., Messrs., Mmes., and Dr.; and any part of a firm name, *if* the company makes the abbreviation itself. An organization should always be addressed by its *exact name*.

2. In cases where a form may or may not be abbreviated, as in the names of states, use the form that produces the best appearance.

3. Do not use a two-line heading with New York on the line with the date.

4. Do not separate the address by the date.

Wrong
70 Fifth Avenue
October 11, 1921
New York, N. Y.

Right
70 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.
October 11, 1921

5. Do not use *rd*, *st*, *nd*, *th*, in connection with dates and streets.

6. Do not use figures alone to designate the date, as 10/11/21. This is permissible only for office memoranda.

7. Do not address any individual or firm without some prefix, as Mr., Messrs., and Mmes. In addressing a stock company, *The* takes the place of these forms of personal address. In the case of large, well known companies, when the individual names have lost their significance, *Messrs.* is often omitted.

Lord & Taylor
Gimbel Brothers

8. In the use of the block or the indentation, the open or the closed forms, the important thing is to follow one method *consistently* throughout the letter.

9. Numbers of streets under ten should be written in words; above that, usually in numerals

810 Tenth Avenue

It is unsafe to place two numbers referring to different things together.

Wrong
70 5th Avenue

Right
70 Fifth Avenue

10. The correct form for New York, is *New York*, N. Y., Salt Lake City, Kansas City, are correct, as "city" is a part of the name. In New York, it is not.

TITLES

Ordinary Forms of Address. *Miss* is the title of an unmarried woman. It is not an abbreviation and is not followed by a period. The plural of *Miss* is *Misses*.

Miss Jane Blake
The Misses Blake

Mrs. is an abbreviation and the title of a married woman.

Mrs. Charles Hodges

If her husband is dead, her title remains the same; but if she is divorced and retains her husband's last name, she uses her own given name with the title of *Mrs.*

Mrs. Annie Pierce Hodges

Mmes., the abbreviation of *Mesdames*, is the form used when addressing a firm composed of women.

Mmes. Talbot and Cheney

Mr., an abbreviation, is used when addressing a man; *Esquire*, or *Esq.*, is also frequently used in addressing lawyers or men of social distinction. *Mr.* precedes the name; *Esquire* follows it. They should never be used together.

Wrong
Mr. James Wade Devine, Esq.

Right
James Wade Devine, Esq.
Mr. James Wade Devine

Messrs., the abbreviation of Messieurs, is used when addressing a firm, composed of men, or men and women, when the names constituting it represent individuals.

Messrs. Jones and Brown
James McCreery & Company

The name of a corporation is usually impersonal and preceded by *The*.

The Edison Company

Examples:

1. To an individual

Mr. George A. Alexander
1421 Columbus Street
San Francisco, California

2. To a firm (men)

Messrs. Crane, Brown and Lenox
49 West Jefferson Street
Omaha, Nebraska

3. To a firm (women)

Mmes. Jane and Alice Grey
45 East 46 Street
New York, N. Y.

4. To a stock company

The National Chemical Company
424 Maiden Lane
Albany, N. Y.

Titles of Honor or Position. *Doctor* is the title of one holding a doctor's degree in medicine, law, theology, literature or philosophy. If the last name only is used, the word *doctor* is written out; otherwise, it may be abbreviated.

Dr. Clayton E. Shaw
Doctor Shaw

M.D., D.D., LL.D., D. Sc., and other abbreviations which denote the title doctor and which follow the name, are not used with Dr.

Clayton E. Shaw, M.D.

The title, *Professor*, is applied to those holding the position of professor or of associate professor. It should not be abbreviated.

Professor Lewis

Reverend is the title of a clergyman. It is sometimes preceded by *The*. It should never be abbreviated. The form *The Reverend Mr.* is also used.

Reverend James Burchard

The Reverend James Burchard

The Reverend Mr. Burchard

When *The Reverend Mr.* is used, the first name is not employed.

Honorable is the title used in addressing men who hold important governmental positions, such as:

Members of Congress

Cabinet Officers

Ambassadors

Governors

Lieutenant Governors

Mayors

Prominent citizens — who are often men who have held one of these positions.

The following special forms are listed:

The President

His Excellency the Governor

The Honorable Elihu Root

His Honor the Mayor

The Most Reverend Archbishop Patrick J. Hayes

The Right Reverend James Stewart, Bishop of Nevada.

Dean Pendleton

Father O'Connor

Titles designating official capacity should be spelled in full.

President
Superintendent
Secretary

These titles usually follow the name on the first line; occasionally they are put on the second line before the name of the company or institution.

Mr. John A. Wells, President
The National City Bank
Philadelphia, Pa.

or

Mr. Archibald Hemmingway
President, Holton University
Marsalia, Illinois

CORRECT SALUTATIONS

Ordinary Business Forms.

For Mr.

Dear Sir:

For Mrs. or Miss

Dear Madam: or Madam:

For Mmes.

Ladies:

For Messrs.

Gentlemen:

Dear Sirs is seldom used in commercial correspondence. *Gentlemen* is the preferred form. However, in addressing a firm, as distinguished from a company or corporation, *Dear Sirs* is still used by the legal profession.

Business Letters of a More Informal Nature.

My dear Mrs.	} Robinson:
or Miss	
or Mr.	

Special Forms.

Editor	Sir:
Mayor	Dear Mr. Mayor:
Governor	Sir:
Senator	Dear Senator or Sir:
President	Sir:

CONCLUSIONS

Position. The conclusion should be centered.

Complimentary Close. The close of the letter must be consistent with the state of the writer's relations with the addressee, and with the contents of the letter.

Conventional business forms:

Yours truly
Yours very truly
Very truly yours

Forms used in addressing *superiors*, only:

Respectfully yours
Very respectfully yours

Other forms to be used as the relations of the writer and the addressee warrant:

Cordially yours
Sincerely yours
Faithfully yours

Always avoid the weak "participial conclusion". The last paragraph of a business letter should be as clear-cut and vigorous as the first.

Participial Conclusion

Assuring you of our co-operation
in the matter,
Hoping that we shall hear favor-
ably from you,
Trusting that this report will
satisfy you,

Simple Statements

We assure you of our co-opera-
tion in the matter.
We hope that your reply will be
favorable.
We trust that this report will
satisfy you.

Never use *I remain*.

Signature. Character. A written signature is always more effective than a stamped or printed one, even on form letters. If the name of the Company is printed or typed on form letters, it is well to have the writer's name follow in ink. The personal touch that this written signature gives a letter is usually worth the effort.

Significance. The signature should always represent the person responsible for the letter. If the signature is the name of the company, the company is responsible for any statement in the letter. If the signature is that of an individual, official or otherwise, he is responsible.

Company Responsibility

THE NATIONAL CHEMICAL COMPANY

James W. Hart
Secretary

Personal Responsibility

James W. Hart
THE NATIONAL CHEMICAL CO.

Position. The signature is written on the line following the complimentary conclusion. If the letter is blocked, it is well to block the conclusion; otherwise, it is better to indent. Care should be taken to allow enough space so that the name of the company will not reach beyond the right margin. From two to four spaces should be left between the "Very truly yours," and the title of the person dictating the letter to allow room for the signature.

Very truly yours,

Hanford Pierce
President,

THE NATIONAL EXPRESS COMPANY

Another form often used is the name of the firm followed by the name of the dictator. The signature may be preceded by *by*, *pro*, or *per*.

Very truly yours,

THE NATIONAL EXPRESS COMPANY

By *Hanford Pierce*

Sometimes the line under the signature has the title of the dictator.

Very truly yours,
THE NATIONAL EXPRESS COMPANY

Hanford Pierce
President

The custom of typing the name placed under the signature is becoming more prevalent. An unfamiliar signature is often difficult to read.

Very truly yours,

Hanford Pierce
Hanford Pierce
President
THE NATIONAL EXPRESS COMPANY

The Stenographer's Responsibility. As the writer of the letter shows his responsibility for the contents by his signature, so the stenographer shows hers for the form, appearance and accuracy by her initials. These should be placed in the left hand corner, preceded by those of the dictator, from which they are separated by a colon or line, as

JWH:AT

Correct Signatures. A man should use as a business signature his first name and his surname; two initials and his surname; or his first name, his middle initial and his surname. Titles, as *Dr.*, should not be included, nor should his name be followed by abbreviations indicating degree.

His signature should be uniform. It should never consist of one initial plus his surname.

Wrong

A. Thomas

Right

Aaron P. Thomas

A. P. Thomas

Aaron Thomas

If a man is writing in his official capacity, his title should follow his name

Arnon P. Thomas, President

or precede the name of the company on the line below.

Women's signatures should be simple, but should clearly define their position. The following are correct forms:

1. Unmarried woman

Jane Brooks

2. Married woman

Jane Brooks
(*Mrs Charles W Brooks*)

3. Widow

(same as 2)

ADDITIONAL FORMS

Encl.
Enclosures (2)
Catalogue } Are placed below the signature at the left
of the paper to indicate enclosures.

Re Order 365 { Referring to Order 365. It is usually placed
at the upper right on the same line as the
salutation.

Attention Mr. Brown { at upper right, on same line as the
salutation.

Keying { A two page letter is clipped together to insure against
its loss. The second page has in the upper left corner
the name and address of the recipient of the
letter.

A number is often placed in the upper left corner to
aid in filing or to ascertain results from an advertising
campaign.

THE LETTER ITSELF

Modern business demands simple, well-planned effective letters. A knowledge of the fundamental principles of composition in the sentence and paragraph, aids in producing clear, forceful communications.

THE SENTENCE

SENTENCE LENGTH

Avoid extremes in sentences.

Very short sentences are apt to be curt, and incomplete in thought; very long sentences are apt to be involved in structure and difficult to understand.

An office manager who has studied this question says, "Three seconds is the normal unit of concentration. Therefore no sentence should be so long, that one cannot read it in three seconds." This limits the business sentence to about twenty-five words, with a minimum of five or six.

POSITION

The important positions in any business letter are the beginning and the end. The beginning should attract attention; the end should clinch the point. Short sentences are better in these positions, as they attract attention and crystallize ideas. Following the same principle, *important words* should be placed at the *beginning or at the end of a sentence*. In certain types of letters, the first sentences are very important in establishing the tone. This is especially true of adjustment, collection and sales letters.

CONNECTIVES

Avoid the monotony and the indefiniteness of the "and" sentences. Wherever possible, substitute a connective that will show a more definite relation between ideas.

LIST OF CONNECTIVES

Time. When, before, after, since, while, until, till, as soon as, as long as, as, whenever.

Poor

We sent your goods on October 10, *and* they were in good condition.

Good

When we sent your goods on October 10, they were in good condition.

Place. Where, wherever, whence, whither.

Poor

I shall select a place to meet you, *and* we can discuss the matter.

Good

I shall select a place to meet you *where* we can discuss the matter.

Manner. As, as if, as though.

Good

He will handle the situation *as if* you were with him.

Comparison. Than, as, whereas.

Poor

Mr. Hodges is a good salesman *and* Mr. Bassett is a better salesman.

Good

Mr. Bassett is a better salesman *than* Mr. Hodges.

Cause. Because, since, for, as.

Poor

We shall be very happy to see your representative *and* we wish to talk to him about your new line of goods.

Good

We shall be very happy to see your representative *as* we wish to talk to him about your new line of goods.

Condition. If, unless, on condition that, provided.

Good

We shall increase your commissions *if* business warrants the added expense.

Purpose. That, so that, in order that, lest.

Poor

We wish you to take the trip *and* get in closer touch with our customers.

Good

We wish you to take the trip *so that* you will get in closer touch with our customers.

Result. That, so that.

Poor

He handled the proposition enthusiastically *and* the sales increased throughout the territory.

Good

He handled the proposition *so* enthusiastically *that* the sales increased throughout the territory.

Concession. Though, although, even if.

Good

Although the material of which these dresses are made is satisfactory, the cut is not distinctive.

Relative Pronoun. Who, which, that.

Poor.

You might take the matter up with Mr. Smith and he will give you estimates.

Good.

You might take the matter up with Mr. Smith who will give you estimates.

Another danger of the "and" connection is, that the parts connected are not always co-ordinate. Since *and* is a co-ordinating conjunction, it *must* connect elements of *equal rank*, i.e., a clause with a clause; a phrase with a phrase.

Wrong

He decided to press the claim, *and that he would take legal action if necessary.*

Right

He decided that he would press the claim, *and take legal action if necessary.*

In the first case, *and* connects an *infinitive* "to press" and a *clause*, "that he would take."

COMMON SENTENCE ERRORS

The young stenographer is apt to make three or four "type mistakes" in construction. She should constantly watch for the following errors:

1. The Comma Error.

Wrong

We are considering your proposition, it sounds very reasonable to us, although it is unusual.

Right

1. *We are considering your proposition.* 2. *It sounds very reasonable to us, although it is unusual.*

In this case, two independent clauses (1 and 2) are separated by a comma, making one sentence. The first clause forms a complete sentence, and is therefore followed by a period.

2. The Divided Sentence.

Wrong

Our representative, Mr. Brown, will call on you during the week of December 20, to discuss this question further. Although we feel that you will understand our position after reading this letter.

Right

Our representative, Mr. Brown, will call on you during the week of December 20, to discuss this question further, although we feel that you will understand our position after reading this letter.

In this case, the period separates the *dependent* clause, introduced by *although*, from the *main* clause. A study of the connectives listed before will help correct this error. These connectives introduce *dependent* clauses, which must be in the *same sentence* with the ideas they qualify.

3. The "And" Sentence. (See page 16).

4. Change in Subject.

Wrong

We have investigated the matter, and *you* will be pleased with the result.

Right

We have investigated the matter and *we* feel sure that you will be pleased with the result.

We, first person, and *you*, second person, are both subjects of co-ordinate clauses. They should be uniformly first or second person.

5. Change of Voice.

Wrong

Your order *was received* this morning, and we *listed* it as Number 403.

Right

We *received* your order this morning, and we *listed* it as Number 403.

Was received, passive voice, and *listed*, active voice are both predicates of the independent clauses. The verbs should be uniformly active or passive. The active voice is the better business form as it is more direct and forceful.

THE PARAGRAPH

PLAN

To produce a letter which gets results, a plan is necessary. An outline of the points to be made constitutes this plan. Each one of these points represents a paragraph.

Plans for routine letters are contained in this book under *Types of Letters*, page 55.

LENGTH

The modern business man presents his ideas simply and pointedly; therefore his paragraphs are short and clear. A good average in ordinary commercial correspondence is five or six sentences. The same principle holds good as with sentences, *Avoid Extremes*.

The one sentence paragraph is effective occasionally. It should be employed seldom, as it has become a cheaply spectacular device through overuse.

EMPHASIS

1. Through Position. The emphatic positions in paragraphs as in sentences, are the beginning and the end. Therefore, the opening paragraph is especially important. It is usually short and forceful. It should seem to make the interest of the reader *primary*; that of the writer, *secondary*. The elimination of *we* or *I*, and the substitution of *you* as the main idea, accomplish this purpose.

Poor

We feel that *we* have adjusted the difficulty satisfactorily.

Good

It is a great pleasure to help *you* avoid the difficulty with the window cleaner.

The opening paragraph or the one immediately following it should introduce the subject, and refer to preceding correspondence.

The final paragraph is equally important, as it is the writer's last chance to impress his reader. It is often longer than the first, crystallizes the ideas of the letter, and carries some *spur to action* on the part of the recipient. Occasionally a one-sentence paragraph is forceful, especially as an incentive to action in *sales* or *collection* letters.

2. Through Contrast. A paragraph of contrasting or balanced ideas is an effective way of gaining emphasis. The connectives, *but*, *on the other hand*, *on the contrary*, etc. help in developing a paragraph of this sort.

Occasionally the mechanical device of balancing statements in opposite columns is used, especially in *claim* or *sales* letters.

I Ordered

4 yds. white dimity @ \$.75
 2 prs. silk stockings,
 black, size 8 @ \$4.00
 6 yds. black satin,
 36 inches wide @ \$4.00

I Received

4 yds. white dimity @ \$.75
 2 prs. silk stockings,
 white, size 8 @ \$4.00
 6 yds. black satin,
 44 inches wide @ \$4.00

3. Through Repetition. Repetition needs careful treatment, since monotony rather than strength, often results. Forceful, intelligent repetition of words may strengthen a point. Repetition of the *idea* by synonym and pronoun is more easily handled by the amateur. (See Diction, page 23).

4. Through Diction. The business vocabulary of today differs greatly from that of ten years ago. It consists of simple, pointed, conversational words, that drive ideas home pleasantly but forcefully.

The varied business interests of the country have developed special trade, shipping and industrial vocabularies, which are of great importance to the stenographer. She should familiarize herself with the vocabulary of the special business with which she is connected. (See Diction page 29)

COHERENCE

The young writer often fails to recognize the value of connectives, in *carrying the thought along* between sentence and sentence in the paragraph and between paragraph and paragraph in the letter.

The following means of connection should be used frequently:

1. Pronouns. The former, the latter, this, that, these, those.

If these refer to some idea in a preceding sentence or

paragraph they carry the thought from the first sentence or paragraph to the pronoun sentence.

2. Adverbs and Phrases.

again	moreover	in addition
further	also	besides
too	first	on the contrary
on the other hand	finally	secondly
thirdly	of course	at last
in fact	therefore	on the whole
however		

3. Repetition of the idea by synonyms. (See page 23).

DICTION

To repeat, from the introduction:

“The business letter is simple and clear in its meaning, just as a friend’s conversation is simple and easy to understand, with no hidden thoughts, no ambiguous meanings, no formal phrases that repel.”

I. *To make a letter simple and easy to understand the writer must avoid:*

1. Purposeless repetition of words as

Wrong

We thank you for your *order* No. 4620. We are shipping part of the *order* by American Express, on December 20, as you directed. The rest of your *order* will be sent on January 1.

Right

We thank you for your *order* No. 4620. We are shipping part of the *goods* by American Express on December 20, as you directed; the *rest* of *them*, on January 1.

The two most successful ways of avoiding repetition are used in the corrected sentence: a *synonym*, in *goods*; a *pronoun*, in *them*.

2. Incorrect word usage

The stenographer’s limitation of vocabulary is responsible for many serious errors in business correspondence. Some of the stenographer’s main faults are:

Confusion of Homonyms, i.e., words that sound alike, but differ in meaning.

further farther

Further indicates *extent of time, degree or quantity*.

Farther indicates *distance*.

Wrong

Until we have a conference with you we cannot discuss the matter *farther*.

Right

Until we have a conference with you we cannot discuss the matter *further*.

respectfully respectfully

respectfully, *literally, full of respect*

respectively, *one by one*

Wrong

Respectively yours

Right

Respectfully yours

accept except

accept, *to receive*

except, *to exclude (as a verb)*

Wrong

We shall be glad to *except* your offer.

We cannot *accept* even our oldest employees in the enforcement of this rule.

Right

We shall be glad to *accept* your offer.

We cannot *except* even our oldest employees in the enforcement of this rule.

affect effect

affect, *to change*

effect, (verb) *to bring about*

effect, (noun) *result*

Wrong

We shall *affect* several changes in our organization, January 1.

This misunderstanding will not *effect* our relations.

Right

We shall *effect* several changes in our organization, January 1.

This misunderstanding will not *affect* our relations.

loose lose

loose, *to untie*

lose, *to part with*

Wrong

Right

We should be sorry to *loose* your patronage.

We should be sorry to *lose* your patronage.

advise (verb)

advice (noun)

Wrong

Right

We shall act on your *advise*.

We shall act on your *advice*.

practise (verb)

practice (noun)

Wrong

Right

We do not make a *practise* of giving discount.

We do not make a *practice* of giving discount.

practicable, *capable of being done*

practical, *valuable in practice; useful*

Wrong

Right

He is a *practicable* man.

He is a *practical* man.

The plan is not a *practical* one.

The plan is not a *practicable* one.

This is only a partial list.
all problems of this sort.

The dictionary should settle

Confusion of Prepositions:

in **into**

In denotes *place where*.

Into denotes *motion from one place to another*.

Wrong

Right

He placed the paper *into* the book.

He placed the paper *in* the book.

Will you please step *in* the office?

Will you please step *into* the office?

off **from**

The preposition *off* is often incorrectly used with the verb *buy*.

Wrong

Right

We bought it *off* Mr. Bushing.

We bought it *from* Mr. Bushing.

NOTE: There is a legitimate use of the expression *buy off*, meaning to bribe, to induce to abstain by some consideration.

Example: Mr. Bates is thoroughly reliable. He could never be *bought off* by our competitors.

by with

Wrong

She lives *by* her sister.

Right

She lives *with* her sister.

between among

Between is used when two are considered; *among* where more than two are concerned.

Wrong

The responsibility was divided
between Mr. Wells, Mr. Grey
and Mr. Smith.

Right

The responsibility was divided
among Mr. Wells, Mr. Grey
and Mr. Smith.

to on

The prepositions *on* and *to* are often used incorrectly with the verb "blame".

Wrong

He blamed it *on* the President.
He blamed it *to* the President.

Right

He laid the blame *on* the President.

of on

Wrong

A sale *on* hats will be held.

Right

A sale *of* hats will be held.

would }
should } of

would }
should } have

Wrong

I *should of* done it if I had known
sooner.

Right

I *should have* done it if I had
known sooner.

different than

different from

Wrong

This is different *than* that.

Right

This is different *from* that.

differ from differ with

Differ from expresses unlikeness. *Differ from* and *differ with* both are used to express divergence in opinion.

Wrong

Right

Your desks *differ with* each other in size.

Your desks *differ from* each other in size.

compare to compare with

Compare to expresses a likeness between the two objects. *Compare with* is used when a dispassionate examination of two things is made to show their characteristic qualities.

Wrong

Right

When those two men are *compared to* each other, one can easily see why one is more successful than the other

When those two men are *compared with* each other, one can easily see why one is more successful than the other.

Use of Unnecessary Words

refer back

Back is unnecessary. *Refer* means to look back.

co-operate together

Together is unnecessary. *Co-operate* means to work together.

return back

Back is unnecessary. *Return* means to go back.

Inaccurate use of words

go come

Go means to depart; *come* means to approach.

Wrong

Right

Our representative, Mr. Clarke, *came* to your office yesterday.

Our representative, Mr. Clarke, *went* to your office yesterday.

take bring

Bring means to convey to the place where the speaker is or is to be. *Take* means to bear away.

Wrong

Bring the samples to Mr. Smith's office at 10 o'clock.

Mr. Shaw will *take* the samples here at 10 o'clock.

Right

Take the samples to Mr. Smith's office at 10 o'clock.

Mr. Shaw will *bring* the samples here at 10 o'clock.

lie lay

There are two verbs: *lie*, to prevaricate, which is a regular verb; and *lie*, to recline, which is irregular.

lie, lied, lying, lied lie, lay, lying, lain

To lay is a regular transitive verb which means to place.

lay, laid, laying, laid

Wrong

I *lay* the papers on your desk this morning.

Let the books *lay* on the desk.

Right

I *laid* the papers on your desk this morning.

Let the books *lie* on the desk.

leave let

Leave means to depart. *Let* means to allow.

Wrong

The manager will *leave* me go this forenoon.

Right

The manager will *let* me go this afternoon.

less fewer

Less refers to quantity. *Fewer* refers to number.

Wrong

There are *less* shipments coming in than formerly.

Right

There are *fewer* shipments coming in than formerly.

Colloquialisms*Poor*

We have received your letter and we shall *look into* the matter.

Better

We have received your letter and we shall *investigate* the matter.

Poor

You can *get me* on the *phone*.
I have *most* finished.
I saw your *ad* in this morning's
"Tribune."

Better

You can *reach me* by *telephone*.
I have *almost* finished.
I saw your *advertisement* in this
morning's "Tribune."

A study of business magazines and trade organs is suggested as a means of adding to the stenographer's vocabulary, general words and the specific words of the trade or business with which she is connected.

The dictionary should be her constant guide.

II. To avoid the "formal phrases that repel", the stenographer should use only friendly, conversational words, not the stereotyped business phrases that belong to a past age and have lost all significance through constant, unintelligent use.

Stereotyped Form

We *wish to submit*.
We *beg to acknowledge* your letter, containing order 420
We are enclosing *herewith*
Enclosed *please find*
We acknowledge the receipt of your letter and in reply would state that our representative will call on you.
Kindly send these at your *earliest convenience*.
In compliance with your request, we are sending you.
Your letter of recent date received, asking us to . . .
Your letter has been received and the *contents duly noted*.
Our Mr. Jones will call on you.

The Conversational Form

We are submitting
We thank you for your order number 420
We are enclosing . . .
We are enclosing . . . or
Enclosed you will find . . .
We have received your letter . . .
We shall be very glad to send our representative to see you.
Kindly send these so that they will reach me by December 20
Kindly send the following:
We are glad to send you.
You asked us in your letter of November 20, to . . .
Our representative, Mr. Jones, will call on you.

Always omit unless they are used in their original meanings:

above (not always clear)	herewith (unnecessary)
advise (only to be used when advice is given)	inst. (name of the month is clearer)
as per (relic of legal terms)	oblige (over-used)
at hand (unnecessary)	recent date (indefinite)
beg (servile)	same (often not clear)
favor (a letter is not a favor)	valued (over-used)

Good commercial English never sacrifices courtesy to brevity by using *abbreviations*, or by *omitting articles, pronouns, verbs, or other words*, necessary to grammatical completeness or rhetorical effect.

GRAMMAR

VERBS

I. TENSES

When a date in the past times a transaction, the *Past* and the *Past Perfect Tense* should be used.

Wrong

On December 29, we have sent you an order for 500 Women's Skirts, No. X-417, assorted sizes and colors.

Right

On December 29, we sent you an order for 500 Women's Skirts, No. X-417, assorted sizes and colors.

When the writer is dating his remarks from the time the letter is sent, the *Present* and the *Present Perfect Tenses* should be used.

Wrong

We *investigated* your claim of January 5.

Right

We *have investigated* your claim of January 5.

Shall and Will. Mistakes in the use of *shall* and *will* are taken as indications of slovenly grammatical habits.

The conjugation of the future tense is:

I shall send

You will send

He (she, it) will send

We shall send

You will send

They will send

Unless one wishes to be emphatic to an extent rarely necessary in polite society, the best plan is to use one of the forms above.

Wrong

We *will* be in the office every morning at ten and *will* be delighted to see you.

Right

We *shall* be in the office every morning at ten and *shall* be delighted to see you.

Extreme determination or a definite promise is shown by the following:

I will send

You shall send

He (she) shall send

We will send

You shall send

They shall send

The occasions when one of these forms can be used occur very seldom.

A question in the first person is always,

“Shall I?”

The general rule is that a question is always asked in the form in which the expected reply should be couched.

Should and **would** stand for *shall* and *will* respectively. The same rules govern their usage.

Wrong

We *would* be pleased to see your samples at any time.

Right

We *should* be pleased to see your samples at any time.

Would is one of the most frequently misused words in the business vocabulary. Usually it is unnecessary.

Wrong

We *would* suggest that you send back, etc.

Right

We suggest that you send back, etc.

II. SPLIT INFINITIVES

Although in English the sign of the infinitive “to” is written as a separate word, it is as firmly attached to the root as is the ending indicating the infinitive of any foreign language. It should never be separated from its root. Such a separation is called “splitting the infinitive.”

Wrong

We therefore ask you to *kindly* investigate.

We have decided to *quickly* examine all applicants.

Right

We therefore ask you to investigate.

We have decided to examine all applicants *quickly*.

III. PARTICIPLES

Since the tendency in modern business correspondence is toward direct statement instead of the participial form, the participle should usually be avoided. Another reason for eliminating it is that the young stenographer often makes two or three common mistakes in its use. One of these is the use of the participle to modify the wrong word.

Wrong

Having considered the matter thoroughly, the *decision* is favorable.

Right

Having considered the matter thoroughly, *we* have reached a favorable decision.

In the first sentence, *having considered* modifies *decision*. This conveys no idea. In the second sentence it modifies *we*, and the meaning is clear.

Another error is the use of *being that* or *seeing that* to introduce a clause; when *since* or some other causal connective is demanded.

Wrong

Being that the goods were damaged, we shall be glad to send you a duplicate of the order.

Right

Since the goods were damaged, we shall be glad to send you a duplicate of the order.

PRONOUNS

I. CASE ERRORS

Nominative

This case must always be used for the subject of a sentence. When the subject is compound, consisting of a noun

and a pronoun, the objective case of the pronoun is often incorrectly substituted for the nominative.

Wrong

Mr. Smith and *me* are planning to leave for Chicago on Monday.

Right

Mr. Smith and *I* are planning to leave for Chicago on Monday.

The verb *to be* takes the same case after it as before. If the first case is nominative, the pronoun following must be in the nominative case.

A common misuse of the objective case, in place of the nominative, occurs often in *direct discourse*.

Wrong

"Whom are you?" said Cyril.

Right

"Who are you?" said Cyril.

In this case the pronoun occurs after *to be*; therefore it takes the same case as its subject *you*. The mistake lies in considering *you*, instead of the entire clause, the direct object of *said*.

Wrong

(a) *Whom* does that appear to be?

Right

Who does that appear to be?

(b) It seems to be *her*.

It seems to be *she*.

In (a) sentence the pronoun before *to be*, is *that*, the subject of *appear*. As subject, it is in the nominative case. Therefore *who*, following *to be*, takes the same case. In the same way in (b), *she* following *to be* goes back to *it*, the subject, for its case.

All forms of the verb *to be* follow the same rule.

Wrong

Is this Miss Blank?
Yes, this is *her*.

Right

Is this Miss Blank?
Yes, this is *she*.

Objective

One of the most common errors in the use of the objective case is made by people who pride themselves on speaking

“elegantly”. Taught to say “John and I”, they continue to say it, disregarding the following rules:

The object of a preposition is always in the objective case.

Wrong

This carries with it the best wishes of the season from Mr. Stevens and *I*.

Right

This carries with it the best wishes of the season from Mr. Stevens and *me*.

The direct object of a verb is in the objective case.

Wrong

Who do you mean?
He consulted my partner and *I*.

Right

Whom do you mean?
He consulted my partner and *me*.

The subject of an infinitive is in the objective case.

Wrong

Who do you suggest to take this responsibility?

Right

Whom do you suggest to take this responsibility?

The verb *to be* takes the same case after it as before. Therefore if it is preceded by an objective case, it must be followed by the objective case.

Wrong

Who do you consider it to be?

Right

Whom do you consider it to be? (Transposed, the sentence reads, You do consider it to be *whom*?)

Possessive

No possessive form of any relative, interrogative or possessive pronoun takes an apostrophe. This usage is not to be confused with the contraction of the pronoun with the verb.

It's means *it is*.

Its is the possessive case of *it*.

You're means *you are*.

Your is the possessive of *you*.

They're means *they are*.

Their is the possessive of *they*.

II. NUMBER ERRORS

It is easy to make mistakes in the number of pronouns referring to the following:

anybody	one
everybody	each
anyone	either, or
everyone	neither, nor
none	

These are singular in meaning and must be referred to by singular pronouns.

Wrong

Will anybody who agrees with me, raise *their* hand?

Everyone must contribute *their* share.

Either Mr. Jones or Mr. Selkirk must make it *their* business to get the order.

Right

Will anybody who agrees with me, raise *her* hand?

Everyone must contribute *his* share.

Either Mr. Jones or Mr. Selkirk must make it *his* business to get the order.

Care must be taken with the verbs that follow these pronouns. The verbs also should be singular.

Wrong

None of you *understand* this principle.

Neither Mr. Jones nor Mr. Selkirk *want* to accept the offer.

Right

None of you *understands* this principle.

Neither Mr. Jones nor Mr. Selkirk *wants* to accept the offer.

A common error is,

He don't

Don't is a contraction of *do not*. The third person singular, present tense of *do* is *does*. Therefore the form is

He doesn't

III. REFLEXIVES

The reflexive pronouns should be used only in conjunction with a personal pronoun for emphasis. They should never be used without an antecedent.

Wrong

Mr. Smith and *myself* are planning to leave for Chicago on Monday.

This carries the best wishes of the season from Mr. Smith and *myself*.

Right

Mr. Smith and *I* are planning to leave for Chicago on Monday.

This carries the best wishes of the season from Mr. Smith and *me*.

PREPOSITIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS

Occasionally a preposition is used incorrectly in place of a conjunction. The most common substitutions are,

like for as

Wrong

He presented the proposition *like* I did.

Right

He presented the proposition *as* I did.

without for unless

Wrong

I will not agree to it *without* you make this concession.

Right

I will not agree to it *unless* you make this concession.

Sometimes a conjunction is used in place of the infinitive form.

try and for try to

Wrong

I shall try *and* rectify this mistake.

Right

I shall try *to* rectify this mistake.

go and for go to

Wrong

Right

I shall *go and* find it in the filing cabinet.

I shall *go to* find it in the filing cabinet.

ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES

When a word qualifies the meaning of a verb, it must be *adverbial* in form. Most adverbs are formed by adding "ly" to adjectives.

rapid rapidly

Many adverbs are formed irregularly.

good well

In such cases the adjective is often incorrectly used in place of the adverb.

Wrong

Right

She types *good*.

She types *well*.

Distinction should be made between the adverb *well* and the adjective *well*, meaning healthy.

Wrong

Right

She feels *good*.

She feels *well*.

This is grammatical but it means that she feels righteous.

This means that no one need be alarmed about her health.

One source of confusion is the sense verbs, i.e., those of sound, smell, sight, feeling, taste. Descriptive words following these usually prove, on analysis, to describe the subject, a noun or pronoun, instead of the verb. Accordingly they should be adjectives instead of adverbs.

The perfume smells *sweet*

The music sounded too *loud*.

She looks *happy*.

The apple tastes *good*.

The orange feels *smooth*.

Some other common mistakes in the use of adjectives and adverbs are:

	real	very	
	<i>Wrong</i>		<i>Right</i>
He made a <i>real</i> good sale.		He made a <i>very</i> good sale.	

Real is an adjective, meaning *genuine*. The sentence requires an adverb of degree.

	very	much	
	<i>Wrong</i>		<i>Right</i>
I am <i>very</i> obliged.		I am <i>very much</i> obliged.	

Very cannot modify a verb. It can only modify an adverb or an adjective. In the second sentence it modifies *much*.

	these kind	this kind	
	<i>Wrong</i>		<i>Right</i>
We do not like <i>these</i> (<i>those</i>) <i>kind</i> (<i>sort</i>) of goods.		We do not like <i>this</i> (<i>that</i>) <i>kind</i> (<i>sort</i>) of goods.	

Kind and *sort* are singular and therefore require the singular forms, *this* and *that*.

To follow *kind* and *sort* with the expression of *a* is incorrect.

	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Right</i>
He is the kind of a man I like.		He is the kind of man I like.

	so	that	
	<i>Wrong</i>		<i>Right</i>
I like a margin <i>that</i> wide.		I like a margin <i>so</i> wide.	
		I like a margin of <i>that</i> width.	

That is an adjective and cannot modify another adjective. It must modify a noun as *width* or be replaced by the adverb of degree *so*.

PUNCTUATION

The tendency of modern business practice is to simplify punctuation.

The following rules are for daily use.

The Period

A period indicates

1. The end of a sentence.
2. An abbreviation.

Capitals

GENERAL RULES

Capitalize

1. The first word of a sentence
2. The first word of a direct quotation
3. The first word of items in listings or outlines
4. The first word of a line of poetry
5. The principal words of a title
6. Titles before proper names
7. Proper nouns or adjectives or words derived from them
8. The principal words in names of clubs, firms, or other organizations
9. The names of the days of the week and the months of the year
10. Exclamations like "Oh!", "Ha!"

A few cases sometimes puzzle the stenographer.

1. Names of *common branches of study* are not capitalized, unless they are *Proper Nouns*.

algebra
history

English
French

2. Words like *street*, *square*, *river*, etc., are capitalized when they are a part of a proper name, but not when used alone.

The streets are all numbered.
West 14 Street is nearest.

3. The names of the seasons are not capitalized unless they are used figuratively.

The laggard, Spring, came limping in.

4. *North*, *south*, *east*, *west*, are capitalized when they denote a section of the country or are part of an address, not when they indicate direction.

The sun rises in the east.
The West sent in a big majority for Roosevelt.
She lives on Central Park West.

5. Names indicating family relationship are capitalized when used alone, to refer to particular persons, or when used with a proper noun.

You have met Mother, haven't you?
We saw her aunt downtown.
Her Aunt Mary came yesterday.

6. *Van* in Dutch names is capitalized. *Von* in German names is not capitalized. *Le*, *la*, *de*, *du*, in French names are capitalized when no title or Christian name precedes them; otherwise, not.

Van Dam, von Weber, La Salle, Pierre le Fabre.

7. Sums of money may or may not be capitalized.

We are enclosing a check for five dollars.
We are enclosing a check for Five Dollars.

8. In double exclamations the second is not capitalized.

"Ha, ha," said the duck, laughing.

The Comma

I. Commas are used to indicate omissions.

Part of your goods will leave December 10; the rest, on January 1.

II. Commas are always used to separate

1. *Words in a series*

Please give us a report on the present market value of *United States Steel, United States Rubber, Adams Express, and Railway Steel Springs.*

NOTE: The comma before *and* is optional.
The tendency is to omit it.

2. *Yes and no* from the rest of the sentence

Yes, we shall be glad to meet your representative.

3. *Direct quotations* from the rest of the sentence

Mr. Barrett replied, "*You will be interested in our proposition.*"

(See *colon* rules also)

4. Words in *direct address* from the rest of the sentence

Miss Brown, will you please take this dictation?

5. Words and phrases in *apposition* from the rest of the sentence

Our representative, *Mr. Baldwin*, will call on you.

6. *Non-restrictive relative clauses* from the rest of the sentence

Our representative, *whom you may recall having met in New York last year*, will take up the matter of Amalgamated Rubber with the proper people.

NOTE: A non-restrictive relative clause is one that may be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence. (Example above.) A restrictive relative clause cannot be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence. *Example:* A water supply *which is contaminated at its source* is a menace to the community.

7. *Two adjacent sets of figures*

In 1922, 161 copies of *Queen Victoria* were sent to you.

8. *Volume, page, or line numbers* following the names of books, magazines, plays, or poems

Vanity Fair XI, 237.

III. When the ideas are not closely connected, commas are used to separate

1. *Introductory adverbial clauses* when they are involved, or the meaning is obscure

When any complicated mechanism, such as The Hoover Machine, gets out of order, the best thing to do is to call in an expert.

2. *Participial phrases* from the rest of the sentence, especially when they are placed at the beginning

Having investigated your claim, we are ready to suggest an adjustment.

3. "*Thrown-in*" expressions from the rest of the sentence

You understand, *of course,* that this is only a temporary offer.

4. *Introductory expressions* from the rest of the sentence

On the other hand, we cannot agree to help him.

5. *A long, involved subject,* from the verb

That he is a more desirable man for the place than any other applicant, is the idea of the entire board.

6. *The parts of a compound sentence,* when they are not closely connected in thought, or the meaning is not clear

He accepted the position, and the salary was raised to meet his requirements.

The Semicolon

1. The members of a compound sentence which are complex in construction or which contain commas are separated from each other by a semicolon.

We regret exceedingly to be forced to take this stand; but, under the circumstances, we have no alternative.

2. The clauses of a compound sentence are separated by a semicolon when the connective is omitted.

Part of your goods will be sent to your New York office on December 10; the rest will be forwarded to the Newark branch, January 1.

3. The members of a series of words, phrases, or clauses which are complex in construction or contain commas are separated from each other by semicolons.

We sent our representative to get information on the following points: the date when the property was insured; the date and exact time of the fire; the probable cause of the fire; the amount of stock on hand; the amount of stock damaged by fire, by water, and by mishandling.

The Colon

1. The colon is used after the salutation in a business letter.

Gentlemen:

2. The colon precedes lists, and usually follows words or phrases like *as follows*, *the following*.

We are sending under separate cover the following:

3. The colon is used before long or formal quotations.

The text of President Harding's speech is:

4. The colon is used before quotations of poetry.

There is hardly a school girl who cannot recite these lines:

Aye, tear her tattered ensign down
Long has it waved on high
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky.

Question Marks

1. The question mark is used at the end of a direct question.

2. Often in business the form of a question is used to present an idea courteously or emphatically with no expectation of an answer. In such a rhetorical question no question mark is needed.

May we expect to hear from you favorably.

The Hyphen

One of the stenographer's most common errors is placing a hyphen in word combinations which should be units or separate words. The best guide here is the latest edition of one of the standard dictionaries. A few general rules may help, although they should not be considered arbitrary.

1. Short words which have been combined for a long time and which are stressed unequally, are not usually hyphenated.

windmill	storekeeper	homelike	raindrop	bookkeeping
schoolroom	childhood	farewell	tomorrow	boathouse

2. Words that are stressed equally, and pronounced separately, are usually hyphenated.

cat-tails	by-laws	son-in-law	half-moon
fellow-servant	self-evident	first-rate	book-dealer

Combinations of half and quarter with other words are hyphenated when the use or derivation is literal. They are written as separate words when the meaning is figurative.

half-moon	half brother
quarter-deck	quarter back

3. In the use of the prefixes *co*, *pre*, and *re*, the vowel following is often the same as the final prefix vowel. In this case, a hyphen or a diaeresis, is often used.

pre-eminent	or	preëminent
co-operation	or	coöperation

4. Points of the compass are not hyphenated unless three directions are indicated

southeast
south-southeast

The Apostrophe

The ordinary stenographer's *stumbling block*, the apostrophe, is used

1. To indicate possession in nouns:

Singular number adds 's

The girl's transcription was good.

Plural number adds 's when the plural does not end in s.

Men's clothes are on sale.

Plural adds ' only, when the plural does end in s.

Boys' clothes are on sale.

Exceptions: If the singular ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *z* the possessive case may be indicated by the addition of an apostrophe.

Jones' store is better than *Jones's* store.

The sign of possession in compound nouns should be placed at the end.

Singular	brother-in-law's
Plural	brothers-in-law's

The sign of possession should be placed after the last word of a series.

The Alexander Smith & Company's report.

2. To form the plural of letters, figures, words and signs

Your *t*'s are not crossed.

Your *3*'s are not well-formed.

There are too many *and*'s in your work.

3. To denote omissions of letters from words. In this case *place the apostrophe where the omission occurs.*

he'll
you're not your'e

Quotation Marks

DIRECT QUOTATIONS

Use double quotation marks

To enclose a *direct quotation*, i.e., the exact words of a speaker.

"Our plan is to pay \$2500 down, and the rest in quarterly installments of \$500 each," replied the Treasurer.

The direct words of each new speaker always begin a new paragraph.

If the quotation is *broken* be careful to enclose both parts in quotation marks.

"Our plan," said the Treasurer, "is to pay \$2,500 down, and the rest in quarterly installments of \$500 each."

If the quotation is broken, the first word only should commence with a capital.

Wrong

"You believe," said Mr. Smith,
"That we should give them a
discount."

Right

"You believe," said Mr. Smith,
"that we should give them a
discount."

Here the original sentence is continued after the break; therefore the continuation commences with a small letter.

Wrong

"He is right," said Mr. Marshall, "you should not have done it."

Right

"He is right," said Mr. Marshall. "You should not have done it."

Here the first sentence of the quotation ends at the break; hence *you* is capitalized.

If a quotation consists of *more than one paragraph*, place quotation marks at the *beginning* of each paragraph, at the *end* of only the *last* one.

If the quotation is incomplete, indicate this by using a small letter.

Example: The Chamber of Commerce is of great value in smaller cities. The President's last report said, "it is of incalculable value to a small growing community."

Here the quotation is only a portion of the President's *original sentence*. The small letter in it indicates this. Sometimes such a quotation is preceded by. . . . , to indicate material not quoted.

NOTE: Place all punctuation marks belonging to the quotation within the quotation marks. This includes the *comma* of separation.

Example: "Impossible!" shouted the Manager. "It cannot have happened."

"You will believe me," replied Mr. Southern, "when you investigate for yourself."

"Will you report at eight?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"We shall commence work then."

Use single quotation marks

To enclose a *quotation within a quotation*

Our salesman turned to say, "But you do not agree with Mr. Marshall, who says, 'the customer is always right.'"

NOTE: The single and the double quotation marks at the end, indicate the end of both the original quotation and the included one.

OTHER USES OF QUOTATION MARKS

1. Quotation marks may be used to denote the title of books, magazines, articles, poems and pictures. Many prefer to underline *once* all such titles, especially in typing, as this method looks neater. In printing, the underlined title becomes italicized.

Bring me *Prentice-Hall Business Digest*.

or

Bring me "Prentice-Hall Business Digest."

Caution: In quoting titles be careful that they are *exact*. Do not carelessly omit articles, or place them outside the quotation marks.

Wrong

We are reading the "House of the Seven Gables."

Right

We are reading "The House of the Seven Gables."

2. Use quotation marks when you wish to indicate that you are using a word in some other sense than its accepted English use, as in the use of *slang*, or *coined words*; or when you use a word as a term or a means of reference.

Stenographers should dress so that they do not resemble the modern "flapper."

"Stenographers" in the sentence above is in the nominative case.

The word "effective" has been used too frequently.

3. Names of ships or trains are often enclosed in quotation marks.

The "Twentieth Century Limited" brings Chicago business even closer to New York.

In these two cases also, underlining may take the place of quotation marks.

Quotation marks are not used

1. To enclose poetry.

Invictus expresses modern individualism in these lines:

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.

2. To enclose *well known quotations* or *proverbs*.

You know the old saying, It is never too late to mend.

NUMBERS

1. In the body of a letter, numbers should usually be written out, when the writing does not become too involved.

Seventeen dollars

\$17.37

Five thousand volumes

4796 volumes

This rule does not apply, of course, to *addresses*, *dates*, *business expressions* like 4%, or *listings*.

It is no longer considered necessary in a typed letter to write a sum of money in two forms, the words followed by the figures in parentheses.

2. Roman numerals are used in referring to passages from the Bible, and in denoting parts or chapters of a book.

Arabic numerals are used to denote verses in the Bible.

II Sam. XIX, 34.

3. Roman numerals are used to designate the acts of a play; Arabic numerals, to designate the lines.

King Lear Act III, Scene II, ll. 54-5.

ABBREVIATIONS OF TERMS COMMONLY USED IN BUSINESS

@, at	C.O.D., Cash On Delivery
a/c, account, on account	cr., credit, creditor
acct., account	cwt., hundredweight
ad val., ad valorem	C.W.O., Cash With Order
agt., agent	D.B., Daybook
a.m., A.M., forenoon	dept., department
amt., amount	dft., draft
ans., answer	dis., disct., discount
A/S, Account Sales	do., the same, ditto
av., average	doz., dozen
bal., balance	dr., debtor
bbl., barrel	ea., each
bdl., bundle	e.e., errors excepted
B/E, Bill of Exchange	e.g., for example
bgs., bags	et al., and others
bkts., baskets	etc., and so forth
B/L } B.L. }	ex., example
Bill of Lading	exch., ex., exchange
bldg., building	exp., express, expense
bls., bales	fgt., frt., freight
b.o., buyer's option	F.O.B. } f.o.b. }
bt., bot., bought	free on board
bu., bushel	F.O.R., Free On Rails
bx., box	for'd., forward
C., one hundred	ft., foot, feet
c., ¢., cents	gal., gallon
cf., compare	G.F.A., General Freight Agent
c.a.f., cost and freight	G.P.A., General Passenger Agent
chgd., charged	gr. wt., gross weight
c.i.f. } c.f.i. }	grs., grains
cost, freight and ins.	guar., guarantee
ck., check	hhd., hogshead
c/o, care of	

h.p., horse-power	pc., piece
hrs., hours	per an., by the year
ib., ibid, in the same place	pk., peck
id., the same	pkg., package
i.e., that is	P.M., afternoon
in., inches, inch	P.O., Postoffice
inc., incorporated	pr., pair
ins., insurance	Pres., President
int., interest	pro tem., for the time
inv., invoice	P.S., Postscript
inv't., inventory	qt., quart
I.O.U., I Owe You	rec'd., received
jour., journal	rec't., receipt
kg., keg	rd., road
lb., pound	ref., reference
L/C., Letter of Credit	ret'd., returned
Ltd., limited	R. F. D., Rural Free Delivery
M., noon	R.R., Railroad
m., Min., minute	Ry., Railway
max., maximum	S/D, Sight Draft
mdse., merchandise	sec., secretary
memo., memorandum	ser., series
mfd., manufactured	sq., square
mfg., manufacturing	S.S., Steamship
mfr., manufacturer	Str., Steamer
mgr., manager	sup't., superintendent
mo., month	T., ton
mos., months	ton., tonn., tonnage
ms., manuscript	treas., treasurer
mss., manuscripts	via, by way of
N.B., take notice	viz., namely
no., nos., number, numbers	vol., volume
N.S.F., not sufficient funds	vs., against
O.K., right	W/B, Way-bill
oz., ounce	wk., week
p., pp., page, pages	wt., weight
payt., payment	yd., yard
p.c., %, percent	yr., year

STATES, TERRITORIES, AND POSSESSIONS

Alabama, Ala.	Nevada, Nev.
Arizona, Ariz.	New Hampshire, N. H.
Arkansas, Ark.	New Jersey, N. J.
California, Cal., Calif.	New Mexico, N. Mex.
Colorado, Colo.	New York, N. Y.
Connecticut, Conn.	North Carolina, N. C.
Delaware, Del.	North Dakota, N. Dak.
District of Columbia, D. C.	Oklahoma, Okla.
Florida, Fla.	Pennsylvania, Pa.
Georgia, Ga.	Philippine Islands, P. I.
Illinois, Ill.	Porto Rico, P. R.
Indiana, Ind.	Rhode Island, R. I.
Kansas, Kans.	South Carolina, S. C.
Kentucky, Ky.	South Dakota, S. Dak.
Louisiana, La.	Tennessee, Tenn.
Maryland, Md.	Texas, Tex.
Massachusetts, Mass.	Vermont, Vt.
Michigan, Mich.	Virginia, Va.
Minnesota, Minn.	Washington, Wash.
Mississippi, Miss.	West Virginia, W. Va.
Missouri, Mo.	Wisconsin, Wis.
Montana, Mont.	Wyoming, Wyo.
Nebraska, Nebr.	

The following should not be abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Samoa, Guam, Idaho, Maine, Oregon, Utah.

SPELLING

As a result of an extensive survey which preceded this book, the authors found that the majority of office managers took a very sensible view toward their stenographers' proficiency in spelling. One prominent executive embodied this attitude when he said, "We do not expect our stenographers to be perfect spellers. We *do* expect them to consult the dictionary."

SYLLABICATION

1. Words should be divided according to their formation.

know-ledge

2. Words are usually divided at the prefix and the suffix.

(prefix)	ab-normal
(suffix)	success-ful

3. No syllables should be separated that are not separated in sound.

Wrong

play-ed

Right

need-ed

4. In double consonants the division is usually made between the consonants.

pos-tulate

5. Words are usually divided "after the vowel."

Wrong

respons-ibility
sal-utary

Right

responsi-bility
salu-tary

6. Words ending in *tion* or *sion* should be divided before this syllable. These endings are syllables pronounced *shun*.

Wrong

obligat-ion
reprehens-ion

Right

obliga-tion
reprehen-sion

THE LETTER OF INQUIRY

The content of this letter is so simple, and the field so broad, that few definite suggestions will be made. Courtesy and clearness should characterize it. In most letters of this type, the following points should be made:

- I. Inquiry or request stated clearly, courteously and briefly
- II. Purpose of inquiry
- III. Appreciation of the anticipated service

LETTER OF INQUIRY

420 Highland Avenue,
Portland, Oregon.
March 11, 1922.

New York Galleries,

Grand Rapids Furniture Company,
417-421 Madison Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Will you kindly send to the address at the head of this letter any catalogs you may have which show Colonial designs for bedroom and dining room furniture?

I have recently purchased a small Colonial country house which I wish to furnish suitably.

I shall appreciate this courtesy very much.

Very truly yours,

May Davison
(Mrs. Luther Davison)

ANSWER TO INQUIRY OR REQUEST

This letter varies with the type of inquiry. The following points however are usually made:

- I. Acknowledgment of the letter of inquiry
- II. The granting of the request, or the refusal of the request.
If the favor cannot be extended, it is polite to give the reason.
- III. A courteous conclusion
This often includes a sales talk.

ANSWER TO INQUIRY OR REQUEST

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE
FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS
NEW YORK CITY
TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1061

March 13, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
420 Highland Avenue
Portland, Oregon

Dear Madam:

*Acknowledgment
of the request.
Granting of
the request*

As you requested in your letter of March 11, we are sending you under separate cover some very interesting prints showing various interiors of American homes.

Sales talk

Since it is our policy to ascertain and to meet individual requirements, we issue no catalogs. Instead, our Service Department is entirely at your disposal without obligation. If you cannot arrange to visit the Galleries on one of your Eastern trips, this department is ready to make suggestions by sketch or by photographs, covering your problem, whether it be a single piece of furniture or an entire interior.

We hope that you will give us an opportunity to co-operate with you.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

Richard M. Spencer
Special Department

RMS:ED

ORDER LETTERS

The two essentials of this letter are:

I. COMPLETENESS OF INFORMATION

1. Description of articles

Detailed description when goods are not ordered from a list or catalog. Reference to number when goods are ordered from a catalog or list. As houses issue new catalogs at frequent intervals, it is necessary to make this reference exact by giving the date or number of publication.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 2. Method of shipping | } When necessary |
| 3. Method of payment | |
| 4. Shipping date | |
| 5. Number of order | |
| 6. Destination | |

II. EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENT.

The point to be featured in this letter is the order. Therefore, it should be placed as a unit in the center of the page, indented and listed.

When the goods are not ordered from a catalog or list, the following is a good form:

"..... please send me the following articles:

4 yds. navy blue satin <i>Ribbon</i> ,		
4 inches wide	@ \$1.50	\$6.00
1 yd. Chantilly <i>Lace</i> ,		
Sample enclosed	@ 16.50	16.50"

When goods are ordered from a catalog or list, the following form is used:

"..... please send me the following articles:

8 dozen Women's Waists, No. X-703,		
sizes 32-40, black,	@ \$9.00	\$72.00"

ORDER LETTERS

420 Highland Avenue,
Portland, Oregon.
March 30, 1922.

New York Galleries,
Grand Rapids Furniture Company,
417-421 Madison Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Please charge to my account
the following articles:

1	61/7854 Dining Room Group,	
	Ten Pieces	\$ 785.00
1	1/2627 Mahogany High Boy	275.00
1	32/612 Walnut Chaise Longue	175.00
	Total	\$ 1235.00

Kindly send these by fast freight to
reach me on or before May 1.
Bill them to

Mrs Luther Davison,
Dune View,
Southampton, Long Island.

Very truly yours,
May Davison
(Mrs Luther Davison)

ORDER LETTERS

148 West 10 Street,

New York, N. Y.,

October 27, 1922.

The Wanamaker Stores,

Broadway at Ninth Street,

New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen :

I am enclosing a check for
\$22.00 for which kindly send the
following articles to the above address:

4 yards navy blue satin <u>Ribbon</u>		
4 inches wide	\$1.50	\$6.00

1 yard Chantilly <u>Lace</u>		
sample enclosed	10.00	10.00

2 pairs 'ladies' black silk		
<u>Stockings</u> , size $9\frac{1}{2}$	3.00	6.00

Total \$22.00

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth Case

Enclosures (2) :

ORDER LETTERS

NOTES

1. Indent all lists to give space for the item to be checked and rechecked in the Order Department and the Shipping Department.

2. Give prominence to the names of the articles ordered by capitalizing or underlining, or by using both devices.

3. Give individual and total prices when the order is accompanied by money in some form, or is to be sent C.O.D. Even when the terms are understood the repetition of the price obviates dispute.

4. Do not use "Enclosed please find." It is unnecessary to ask anyone to "please find" money enclosed. The form "I am enclosing" or "Enclosed you will find" is an accepted opening.

5. Make the tone of the letter courteous by using such expressions as "kindly send" or "please send." In this case you are asking for service. In the case above there is neither service nor favor in finding the check.

6. Make the tone of the letter courteous by using complete statements. Do not employ forms like "Enclosed find check" instead of "Enclosed you will find a check."

7. Designate the number of enclosures by writing "enclosures" with the number of enclosures after the word, or "enclosure" at the left margin under the stenographer's initials.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ORDER

The new customer's first impression of a business house is formed by the manner in which his initial order is handled. An order, large or small, should be acknowledged briefly, promptly and in a tone of welcome.

I. The simplest type of acknowledgment should include:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ORDER

1. Appreciation of order
2. Date of order
3. Reference to method of payment
4. Number of order
5. Some form of re-statement

SHIPPING INFORMATION

A SHORT SALES TALK

1. In the case of a new customer this should sound a note of welcome and hope of future service.
2. In the case of an old customer it should show appreciation of the relationship and desire for further service.

II. Another type is one that explains delayed or incomplete shipment. This letter contains the points under I, with an explanation of the special condition, plans for an adjustment, and an expression of regret.

III. A printed postcard with blanks for specific information as to dates and amounts is often used in reply to routine orders. It is not good business to use a post card to acknowledge an initial order; it is not complimentary to use this form to acknowledge a large order or one which represents a relationship of long standing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ORDER

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE
FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS
NEW YORK CITY
TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1061

April 5, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
420 Highland Avenue
Portland, Oregon

Dear Madam:

*Acknowledg-
ment of order
Date Method
of payment*

We thank you for your letter of March 30,
ordering the following pieces of furniture,
to be charged to your account:

*Re-statement
of order*

1 #61/7854 Dining Room Group, ten pieces	\$785.00
1 # 1/2627 Mahogany High Boy	275.00
1 #32/612 Walnut Chaise Longue	175.00
	<u>\$1235.00</u>

Number

This has been listed as order number
16754, to which you will please refer if you
have occasion to write.

*Shipping
information*

As you requested, these goods will be sent to
Dune View, Southampton, Long Island, by fast
freight, to reach you by May 1.

Sales talk

You will no doubt be pleased with these pieces.
If you should for any reason be dissatisfied, we
shall make every effort to adjust the difficulty.

Very truly yours,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

Maxwell S. Maurer

.....
Sales Division

MSM:ED

NOTICE OF SHIPMENT

The notice of shipment includes the following information:

I. Shipping Notice

Date

Method

express

freight

truck, etc.

Route

II. Condition of goods

Many houses use a printed postcard with blank spaces for dates, method of shipment, and route.

NOTICE OF SHIPMENT

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE
FORTY-EIGHT AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS
NEW YORK CITY
TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1091

April 20, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

Date
Order number
Method of ship-
ment
Route

In accordance with your request we are shipping today, your order listed as number 16754, by fast freight, via the Long Island Railroad, as per enclosed Bill of Lading.

Condition
of goods

These goods were carefully packed and should arrive in good condition.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

Martin S. Murphy...
Shipping Department

MSM:ED
Enclosure

LETTER OF CLAIM

This letter is simple in form. The purchaser knows that a business house usually follows the slogan, "*The customer is always right.*" Therefore, his only obligation is to present his case promptly, clearly, and pleasantly.

This letter should include:

- I. Reference to transaction (date, nature)
- II. The difficulty
- III. Request for adjustment
- IV. Courteous conclusion

Claims are frequently made about unsatisfactory service.

I. Business

Janitorial

Heat

Light

Elevator

Repairs, etc.

Personal

Rudeness of employees

Lack of proper attention, etc.

Sales

Orders incomplete or wrong

Quality of goods

Damaged goods

Defective goods

Misrepresented goods

Billing

Overcharge

Undercharge

Delivery

Delayed

Incomplete

II. Public

Express

Railroads

Telephone

Electricity

Gas

City Departments

etc.

LETTER OF CLAIM

Dune View,
Southampton, Long Island.
April 28, 1922.

New York Galleries.
Grand Rapids Furniture Company.
417-421 Madison Avenue,
New York. N. Y.

Gentlemen:

On March 30 I ordered from
you the following articles to be
charged to my account:

1	61/7854 Dining Room Group.	
	Ten Pieces	\$785.00
1	1/2627 Mahogany High Boy	275.00
1	32/612 Walnut Chaise Longue	175.00
		<hr/>
		\$1235.00

You acknowledged the order on April 5
and numbered it 16754.

The articles arrived on April 27.
I regret to say however, that the back

LETTER OF CLAIM

of one chair is broken and the entire front of the high boy is badly scratched. You will know from your records whether this is due to faulty packing or to rough handling in transit.

What do you wish me to do with the high boy and chair? I await your instructions with complete confidence that you will be able to suggest some satisfactory solution.

Very truly yours,

May Davison
(Mrs. Luther Davison)

LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

The tone of this letter should be conciliatory and assuring. The customer must not be lost; the firm must not suffer.

The letter should contain:

- I. Definite reference to the claim with the date and nature of the transaction
- II. Results of an investigation of the trouble
- III. The adjustment suggested
- IV. Courteous statement of regret and a sales talk for the future

The nature of the situation will determine the order and relative importance of these points. The beginning of this letter is most important, as the man who is to receive it is in an unfavorable frame of mind. The effective letter is one that puts him in a good humor immediately. Emphasize adjustment rather than difficulty; his point of view rather than yours. "It is a *pleasure* to help *you* avoid the difficulty with the multigraph," is better than, "*We* are sure *we* can help you avoid the difficulty."

LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE

FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS

NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 4061

April 30, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

*Reference
to claim*

We regret to learn from your letter of April 28th that the pieces of furniture shipped under order number 16754, reached you with one chair broken and the high boy scratched.

*Results of
investigation*

Since our records show that all of the pieces left the factory in perfect condition, we have taken the matter up with the railroad.

*The ad-
justment
suggested*

Will you be good enough to keep the high boy and chair in your possession until the adjustor for the railroad calls to verify our claim of damage?

In the meantime we are sending you today by express, duplicate pieces in perfect condition, which should reach you in a few days.

*Courteous
expression
of regret*

Although we feel that the accident was not due to any carelessness on our part, we regret exceedingly that you have been inconvenienced.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

Mark S. Maxon
.....
Service Department

MSM:ED

LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

The head of a large business organization gives the following suggestions:

- I. *Never lose your temper*, nor allow your tone to carry with it an air of accusation.
- II. *Never be sarcastic.*
- III. Always give your reader *information pleasantly*. Never instruct him.
- IV. *Never embarrass your reader* by asking him to admit he is wrong. Unless a customer offers to admit his mistake, don't make an effort to get an admission.
- V. Avoid attempted *humor, flattery, and untruthfulness*. Be sincere.
- VI. Avoid using any words that might *reflect on the customer's veracity*.
- VII. Avoid *negative suggestions*.
- VIII. Avoid *hazy explanations* of the error.
- IX. Avoid *hasty or incomplete adjustment* which afterwards leads to:
 1. Denial of a just claim
 2. Further complications
 3. Settlement with dishonest claimants

COLLECTION LETTER

The tone of this letter is very important. As in the letter of adjustment, the aim is to settle the *difficulty without loss to the firm, and to keep the customer*, so in this letter the aim is *to collect the money and to keep the customer*.

Since most customers are honest, their accounts are an asset. Therefore, letters are planned to appeal to the honest man who is in trouble or is slow, easy-going and careless.

Usually a series is planned, the first two of which are type letters, the third and fourth of which vary to meet the special condition that exists. The series should be progressively urgent, and should usually contain the following points:

Letter 1.

- Statement of balance
- Date of purchase
- Friendly request for payment

Letter 2.

- Reference to first collection letter
- Reference to amount and date of purchase
- Request for explanation

Letter 3.

- Reference to preceding letter
- Reference to amount and date of purchase
- The firm's suggestion as to the customer's action

This suggestion depends upon the nature of the contract, the policy of the firm, the standing of the customer. The following methods are applicable to certain situations:

Suggestion of partial payment

Refusal to increase the account

Urgent request with an appeal to pride, the reputation of customer, past business relations, etc.

Letter 4.

Reference to preceding letters

Reference to the amount and date of purchase

Threat

Collection Agency

Draft

Intended legal action

Notice of legal action

COLLECTION LETTER

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE
FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS
NEW YORK CITY
TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1061

June 1, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

*Reference to
balance*

May we call your attention to the enclosed statement of your account now due, for which itemized bills were sent at the time of delivery, May 1. This matter has evidently escaped your attention.

*Reference to
date of purchase*

*Friendly request
for payment*

We shall appreciate a prompt remittance.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

M. S. Mayberry
Credit Department

MSM:ED
Enclosure

COLLECTION LETTER

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE,

FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS

NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1061

July 1, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

*Reference to
amount and
date of pur-
chase
Request for
payment or
explanation*

We are obliged to remind you again
of your overdue account of \$1235.00,
for purchases delivered May first;
and to request an immediate settle-
ment, or an explanation of any circum-
stances which have prevented you from
meeting the obligation.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

M. S. Mayberry
Credit Department

MSM:ED

COLLECTION LETTER

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE

FORTY-EIGHTH AND FORTY-NINTH STREETS

NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE WANDERBILT 1061

August 1, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

*Reference to
amount*

We cannot understand why we have not received a check for your account of \$1235.00, now several months overdue, or any explanation why it has not been paid.

Suggestion

In accordance with our credit arrangements, we shall be obliged to place this account for collection unless we hear from you by return mail.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

M. S. Mayberry
.....
Credit Department

MSM:ED

COLLECTION LETTER

New York Galleries

Grand Rapids Furniture Company
INCORPORATED

417-421 MADISON AVENUE

FORTY-THIRTIETH AND FORTY-FOURTH STREETS

NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE VANDERBILT 1061

August 15, 1922

Mrs. Luther Davison
Dune View
Southampton, Long Island

Dear Madam:

*Reference to
amount and
date of pur-
chase*

*Threat of
legal action*

This is to inform you that if you do not send a remittance covering your May account of \$1235.00 within ten days from date, or make satisfactory arrangements for its settlement, we shall be compelled to place the matter in the hands of our attorney without further notice.

Yours very truly,

NEW YORK GALLERIES
Grand Rapids Furniture Company
Incorporated

M. S. Mayberry
Credit Department

MSM:ED

THE APPLICATION LETTER

The First Position. Since this letter is of such a highly individual nature, it seems best to make no attempt in High School to cover any situation except that with which the pupil is confronted when he leaves school.

The letter in which the graduate applies for his first position should be simple, short and definite. Its form is most important. The following points should be considered:

A. Form

1. Stationery

This should be white, preferably English Bond, of Commercial size ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$), with envelope to match.

2. Typing

This should be clear-cut with no erasures, no errors, no change in ribbon. The signature should be in ink.

3. Arrangement

The letter should be limited to one page, if possible. It should present an attractive appearance, well margined and well spaced. Whenever possible, information should be arranged in lists. This applies especially to records of schools, and names and addresses of references.

B. Content

1. Information

- (a) Source of information concerning the vacancy
- (b) Age

- (c) Preparation } general education
 } special education
 } experience
- (d) References
- (e) Complete address, including telephone number
- (f) Request for interview, stating available time

2. Expression

The letter should be brief, clear and complete.

Its tone should be neither over-confident, nor servile.

This is one of the few types of letter where *Respectfully yours* is the preferred complimentary close.

APPLICATION LETTER

Dear Sir:

Will you please consider me an applicant for the position of stenographer in your office, advertised in this morning's "Tribune." The following are my qualifications:

Age.....17

Education

P.S. 47.....1910-1918

Washington Irving High School

Commercial Course.....1918-1921

Experience

Office Practice....1 year Washington
Irving High School

Stenographer

James Putnam Company - June -
September 1921

References

Miss Ethel Gittoe
Bureau of Employment
Washington Irving High School
40 Irving Place, New York, N.Y.

Mr. James Putnam
120 Broadway
New York, N.Y.

Miss Louise Allyn
40 Irving Place
New York, N.Y.

I shall be very glad to go to your office for an interview, at any time you may set. You can reach me by telephone at Spring 4320.

I hope that my application will be favorably considered and that I shall be given an opportunity to work for you or (name of organization).

Yours respectfully,

SALES LETTERS

To make a sale is the one purpose of a sales letter. It is not enough that it stimulate curiosity, awaken interest, flatter or please the reader. It stands or falls by one standard, Did it produce an order?

It is rare indeed, that a young stenographer is asked to construct this most carefully studied, delicately proportioned piece of correspondence. If, however, she has to type many sales letters, she can learn a great deal from them, if she knows the basic principles by which they are constructed.

Often in an advertising campaign, a series of letters is used. In this brief discussion, the complete letter only will be analyzed. The man writing this type of letter has four problems:

1. How can he save the letter from the wastebasket?
2. How can he convince the reader that the article is superior?
3. How can he persuade the reader that he *wants* this product?
4. How can he get the reader's name on the "dotted line"?

I. *How can he save the letter from the wastebasket?* One seldom refuses admission to a well-groomed man with a cordial manner. He is given a chance to state his business. So too, no one refuses to glance at a letter which is written on good stationery, which is well typed and effectively arranged. This glance carries directly to the first sentences. These decide whether the reader continues. Originality of form and expression and sincerity of tone are most effective. Sometimes the introductory sentences are arresting in their

brevity and startling in their daring; but these qualities are useless if the reader feels a lack of sincerity.

II. *How can he convince the reader that the article is superior?* He has secured his audience by his effective introduction. Now he must convince the reader of the worth of the article or service. Whether he uses a scientific explanation, statistics, illustration, general argument, testimonials, depends both on the product and the prospective customer. A new dental preparation would be explained to the dentist by a set of terms which would leave the ordinary reader bewildered. The train of argument employed should be clear enough to be understood by the lowest in intelligence of the selected group addressed, and it should be searching enough to satisfy the most captious. A clear understanding of the product, discrimination and a logical intelligence make light work of this paragraph or group of paragraphs.

III. *How can he persuade the reader that he wants this article?* It is one thing to convince a man that a product is good; it is another matter to make him desire it. In the first case the appeal is to the *intelligence*; in the second, it is to the *emotions*. It is in this second appeal, that the writer's knowledge of human nature comes into play. If he can remember how much he wanted ice skates when he was nine; if he knows how much a young girl wants to look attractive at the school dance; if he realizes how much a saving of three dollars a month means to Mrs. "Across the Street"—if he can see his product through the eyes of the buyer, he can write an irresistible appeal.

The reader is persuaded through any strong emotion. An analysis of popular advertising shows that the copywriter and the artist are most successful when they appeal to

1. Appetite
2. Vanity

3. Pride
4. Fear of loss
5. Acquisitiveness
6. Love of beauty
7. Economy

The writer of a sales letter has a more difficult task than the copy-writer, whose appeal is to be strengthened by illustration. He must arouse an emotion with words, as powerful as that which the words and the drawing produce in pictorial advertising.

IV. *How can he get the reader's name on "the dotted line"?* By getting the reader's name on the dotted line, is meant some definite action which may result in purchase. "Do it now" is the spirit of this conclusion. Since modern life is so demanding, and human nature so procrastinating, the writer should make action very easy and attractive for the reader. This may be done by

1. Enclosing an order blank
2. Enclosing an order blank asking that a salesman call
3. Enclosing a postcard which is to be returned
4. Adding a form which can be torn off and mailed, asking for catalog, samples or other illustrative material. Often this is to be accompanied by a small amount of money.
5. The installment plan which calls for a small initial payment and remittances at regular intervals
6. A "time limit" offer

TELEGRAMS

Telegrams because of their cost must be brief. However, their clearness should never be sacrificed to their brevity. Since marks of punctuation are omitted unless paid for, the message must be constructed in such a way that a change in punctuation by the recipient will not alter the meaning.

The writer should ascertain by reference to the handbook of the Telegraph Company whether a term counts for one word or more than one word. The handbook will also decide whether a regular message, a night letter, or a day letter will be the best form.

Telegrams are typed in duplicate or triplicate. Three or four spaces are left between the words so that the operator will make no mistake.

The Directions

Will you arrange to meet me at the Blackstone in Chicago at 4 o'clock on September 26, 1922? I want to submit a proposition to you that I think will interest you.
(34 words)

The Telegram

Meet me Blackstone Chicago
September 26 at 4 have
proposition (10 words)

INCORRECT

45 W. 46 Street.,
New York City, Dec. 26, 1922.

The Quality Silk Mills,
Meriden, Conn.

Dear Sir,

I would like to have you
send me a catalog of silk
I would like this by Tuesday
as I need the silk and oblige
Mrs. James Woke.

CORRECT

45 West 46 Street,

New York. N. Y.

December 26, 1922.

The Quality Silk Mills,
Meriden, Conn.

Gentlemen:

Will you please send to the address written at the head of this letter, your latest catalog showing heavy silks suitable for draperies.

I thank you very much for your courtesy.

Very truly yours.

Marian Hoke.

(Mrs. James Hoke)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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MAGAZINES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- PRINTERS' INK, weekly magazine. The Printers' Ink Publishing Company.

PRENTICE-HALL BUSINESS DIGEST, a digest of articles from business magazines, house organs, etc. Prentice-Hall, New York.

SYSTEM, monthly magazine. A. W. Shaw and Company, Chicago, Ill.

THE ANNALIST, weekly magazine. The New York Times.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, weekly magazine. Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE, monthly magazine. The Crowell Publishing Co., Springfield, Ohio.

TRADE MAGAZINES. Trades and professions usually have representative publications. Stenographers will find these very valuable in increasing their business vocabularies and adding to their knowledge of trade or professional conditions. *Examples:* WOMEN'S WEAR, THE IRON AGE, DRY GOODS ECONOMIST, ADVERTISING AND SELLING.

HOUSE ORGANS. Large manufacturing establishments and business concerns often publish "house organs," i.e., magazines representing the various activities of their organizations. It is often interesting and valuable to be familiar with the house organs of organizations similar to the one in which the stenographer is employed.

INDEX

- Abbreviations: business forms, 51,
52; firm names, 6; letter forms,
6; months, 6; never sacrifice
courtesy for, 30; states, 6, 53;
territories, 53; titles, 7, 8, 9, 10,
51, 52
- Accept, except*, 24
- Acknowledge*, 29
- Acknowledgment, letter of, 64, 65
- Addresses, 3, 4
- Ad*, 29
- Adjectives: *above*, 30; after sense
verbs, 38; confusion with ad-
verbs, 38, 39; *different from*, 27;
different than, 27; *fewer*, 28;
less, 28; *practicable*, 25; *prac-*
tical, 25; *recent date*, 30; *same*,
30; *valued*, 30
- Adjustment, letter of, 72, 73, 74
- Adverbs: *back* (*refer back, return*
back), 27; coherence, 22; com-
mon errors, 38, 39; confusion
with adjectives, 38, 39; *farther*,
24; *further*, 24; formation of, 38;
herewith, 30; irregular, 38; *re-*
spectfully, 24; *respectively*, 24;
together (co-operate), 27
- Advertisement*, 29
- Advice*, 25
- Advise*, 25
- Affect, effect*, 24
- Among, between*, 26
- And*, misuse of, 16, 17, 18
- Answer to inquiry, letter of, 58, 59
- Anybody*, 36
- Anyone*, 36
- Apostrophe, rules for, 46, 47
- Application, letter of, 81, 82, 83
- Arabic numerals, for verses in the
Bible, 50; plural of, 47
- Arrangement, letter on paper, 2
- As, like*, 37
- Attention of*, 14
- Back* (*refer back, return back*), 27
- Balance, for coherence, 21
- Beg*, 29
- Being that*, 33
- Between, among*, 26
- Bibliography, 90, 91
- Billing: overcharge, undercharge,
69
- Blame to, on*, 26
- Block form, 3
- Bring, take*, 28
- Broken quotations, rules for, 47
- Buy off, from*, 25
- By, with*, 26
- Capitals: order lists, 63; quota-
tions, 48; rules for, 40, 41
- Case, pronouns, 33-36
- Catalogs, 14, 60
- Claim, letter of, 68, 69, 70, 71
- Closed punctuation, 3
- Coherence, means of in para-
graphs, 21, 22
- Coined words, 49
- Collection letters, 75-80
- Colloquialisms, 28, 29

- Colon, rules for, 44
Come, go, 27
 Comma: error, 18; rules for, 42, 43
Compare to, with, 27
Compliance, 29
 Compound words: plural of, 46;
 possessive case of, 46
 Conclusion: business, 11; cen-
 tered, 2, 11
 Correct forms: ordinary, 11;
 for superiors, 11; other forms,
 11; participial, 11; signatures,
 12-14
 Confusion: adjectives with ad-
 verbs, 38, 39; conjunctions with
 prepositions, 37; homonyms,
 23, 24, 25; prepositions, 25,
 26, 27
 Conjunctions: confused with prep-
 ositions, 37; danger of *and* con-
 nection, 16; kinds of adverbial,
 16, 17, 18
 Connectives: within sentences,
 16, 17, 18; between sentences, 20
Contents duly noted, 29
 Contrast, for emphasis, 20
Co-operate together, 27
 Correct order letter, 88
 Date: errors in writing of, 6, 29;
 on dotted line, 4
 Position of: no letterhead, 3;
 letterhead, 4
 Special forms, 4
 Delivery: delayed or incomplete,
 69
 Diaeresis, use of, 45
 Diction: conversational, 1, 29
 Errors: colloquialisms, 28, 29;
 confusion of prepositions, 25,
 26, 27; homonyms, 23, 24,
 25; inaccurate use of words,
 27, 28; incorrect usage, 23-
 29; repetition, 21, 23; un-
 necessary words, 27
 Formal, 29; friendly, 29; spe-
 cific, 29; stereotyped, 29;
 study of business magazines
 for improvement of, 29, 90,
 91; trade and business, 29
 Different from, than, 26
 Differ from, with, 27
 Direct discourse, 34
 Direct quotations, rules for, 47, 49
 Divided sentence, 18
Doesn't, 37
Don't, 37
Dr., 8
Duly noted, 29

Each, 36
Effect, affect, 24
Either, 36
 Emphasis: through contrast, 20;
 through diction, 21; through
 position, 20; through repeti-
 tion, 21
Enclosed, 29, 62, 63
Enclosures, 14, 62, 63
Everybody, 36
Everyone, 36
Except, accept, 24
 Exclamations, punctuation of, 40,
 41

Farther, further, 24
Fewer, less, 28
 Figures, plural of, 25
 Form of letter, 2-15
From, of, off, 25
Further, farther, 24

Get me, 29
Go, come, 27

- Go and, go to*, 38
Good, well, 38
 Grammar: adjectives, 38, 39; adverbs, 38, 39; conjunctions, 37, 38; prepositions, 37, 38
 Pronouns, 35-38; case errors, 33-36; number errors, 36, 37; reflexives, 37
 Verbs, 31-33; participles, 33; *shall, will*, 31; *should, would*, 32; split infinitive, 32; tenses, 31
 Headings: block form, open punctuation, 3; indentation form, closed punctuation, 3; stationery with letterhead, 3; stationery without letterhead, 4; two-line, 6; three-line, 6
Her, she, 34
Herewith, 29
Honorable, 9
 Homonyms, 23, 24, 25
 Hyphen, rules for, 45, 46
I, me, 34, 35
In, into, 25
 Incomplete quotations, rules for punctuation of, 48
 Incorrect word usage, 23-29
 Incorrect order letter, 89
 Indentation: arrangement, 3; of lists, 63
 Infinitives, split, 32
 Initials, stenographer's, 13, 59
 Inquiry, letter of, 56, 57
In, into, 25
 Introductions: block form, open punctuation, 3; examples, 3, 4; indentation form, closed punctuation, 3; position, 3; punctuation of, 3; special forms, 5
It's, it is, 35
 Keying, 14
Kind, this and that, these and those, 39
Lay, lie, 28
Leave, let, 28
Less, fewer, 28
Let, leave, 28
 Letters: acknowledgment of order, 64, 65; adjustment, 72; answer to inquiry, 58, 59; application, 81, 82, 83; claim, 68, 69, 70, 71; collection, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80; correct and incorrect, 88, 89; forms for, 2-15; inquiry, 56, 57; letterheads, 3, 4; notice of shipment, 66, 67; one-page, 2; order, 60, 61, 62, 63; sales, 84-86; two-page, 2
 Letterheads, 3, 4
 Letters, plural of, 46
Lie, lay, 28
Like, as, 37
 Lists: in order letters, 60, 61, 62; indentation of, 63
Look into, 28
Loose, lose, 24
 Magazines: business, trade, house organs, 29, 90, 91
 Margins, 2
Me, I, 34, 35
Messrs., 8
Miss, 7
Mmes., 7
Most, almost, very, 29
Mr., Mrs., 7
Much, very, 39
Myself, misuse of, 37
Neither, nor, number of verb and pronoun following, 36

- Nominative, case errors in pronouns, 33-35
- None*, number of verb and pronoun following, 36
- Noted, contents duly*, 29
- Nouns: *advice*, 25; capitalization of, 40, 41; compound, 45, 46; *date, recent*, 30; *effect*, 24; *favor*, 30; hyphen, use of, 45, 46; *inst.*, 30; possessive case of, 46, 47; *practice*, 25; syllabication of, 55
- Number, errors in pronoun and verb, 33-36
- Number: of order, 60, 64; of enclosures, 63
- Numbers: of streets and avenues, 6; rules for writing of, 50; two together in address, 7
- Numerals: arabic, 50; roman, 50
- Objective, case errors in pronouns, 34, 35
- Of*: use with *should, would*, 26; use with *off*, 26
- Off*, use with *of*, 25, 26; confusion with *from* and *on*, 25, 26
- Official letters, 5
- On, blame*, 26
- Omission: of words in business letters, 30; to denote omissions, 47
- One*, number of verb and pronoun following, 36
- Open form of punctuation, 3
- Order, acknowledgment of, 64, 65
- Order, letter of, 60-63
- Our, our representative*, 29
- Paper: quality of, 2; size of, 2
- Paragraphing, of quotations, 47, 48
- Paragraphs: coherence in, 21, 22; emphasis in, 20; length, 20; plan, 19
- Participles: participial conclusion, 11; errors in use of, 33; punctuation of, 43
- Period, uses of, 40
- Please find*, 29, 63
- Position: in sentence for emphasis, 15; in paragraph for emphasis, 20
- Possessive case: pronouns, confusion with verb contractions, 35, 36; formation of, 46
- Post cards: for acknowledgments, 64; for shipping notice, 66
- Practice, practise*, 25
- Prepositions: *as, like*, 37; *as per*, 30; *at hand*, 30; *between, among*, 26; *by, with*, 26; errors in use of, 25, 26, 37; *from*, with *different, differ*, 27; *in, into*, 25; *of, off, from*, 25; *of, on*, 26; *of*, with *should* and *would*, 26; *to, and*, 37; *to, on*, with *blame*, 26; *to, with* with *compare*, 27; *unless, without*, 37
- Prefix, syllabication after, 55
- President*, 10
- Professor*, 14
- Pronouns: cases of, 33-36; errors in use of, 33-36; possessives, 35, 36; reflexives, 37; to avoid repetition, 23
- Proverbs, punctuation of, 49
- Punctuation: apostrophe, 46, 47; capitals, 41, 42; colon, 44; comma, 42, 43; hyphen, 45, 46; period, 40; of letter forms, 3; period, 40; question marks, 45; of quotations, 40, 42, 44, 48; semicolon, 43, 44

- Question: marks, use of, 45;
rhetorical, 45
- Quotations: broken, 47; capitalization of, 47; direct, 47, 48, 49; incomplete, 48; paragraphing of, 47; punctuation of, 40, 42, 44, 48; within a quotation, 48
- Quotation marks: errors in use of, 49; use with names of ships, trains, 49; use in coined words, 49; use with slang, 49
- Re*, regarding, 14
- Real*, *very*, 39
- Reach me*, 29
- Recent date*, 29
- Refer back*, 27
- Reflexive pronouns, 37
- Repetition: by synonym and pronoun, 21, 22; dangers of, 21, 23
- Respectfully*: use of, 11
- Respectfully*, *respectively*, 24
- Restrictive, and non-restrictive adjective clauses, punctuation of, 42
- Return back*, 27
- Reverend*, 9
- Rhetorical question, 45
- Roman numerals, uses of, 50
- Sales, letter of, 84, 85, 86
- Sales talk, 58, 64, 72
- Salutations: business, 10; friendly, 10; special forms of, 11
- Secretary*, 10
- Seeing that*, 33
- Semicolon, uses of, 43, 44
- Sentence: "and" sentence, 16, 17, 18; common errors in, 18, 19; connectives in, 16, 17; length, 15; position for emphasis, 15
- Shall*, *will*, 31
- She*, *her*, 34
- Shipment: delayed or incomplete, 64; notice of, 66, 67
- Should*, *would*, 32
- Should of*, 26
- Signatures: character of, 12; company responsibility, 12; examples, 13, 14; personal responsibility, 12; stenographer's responsibility, 13; typed, 13; with *by*, *pro*, *per*, 12
- Signs, plural of, 46
- Slang, quotation marks with, 49
- So*, *that*, 39
- Sort*: *this*, *that*, 39; *of a*, 39
- Spacing, 2
- Spelling, 54
- Split infinitives, 32
- States, abbreviations of, 53
- Stationery, quality, size, 2
- Stereotyped business forms, 29
- Subject, change in, 19
- Submit*, 29
- Suffix, syllabication before, 55
- Superintendent*, 10
- Syllabication, rules for, 55
- Synonyms: for coherence in paragraphs, 22; to avoid word repetition, 23
- Take*, *bring*, 28
- Telegrams, 87
- Telephone*, *phone*, 29
- Tenses, of verbs, 31, 32
- Than*, with *different*, 26
- That*, *so*, 39
- They're*, *their*, 36
- This*, *these*, with *kind* and *sort*, 39
- Titles: abbreviation of, 7, 8, 9, 10, 51, 52; necessity for, 6; of honor or position, 8, 9, 10;

- ordinary forms of address, 7, 8;
of books, magazines, articles,
poems, pictures, 48, 49
- Underlining: in order lists, 63;
names of ships and trains, 49;
slang, coined words, terms of
reference, 49; titles of books,
magazines, articles, poems, pic-
tures, 48, 49
- Unless, without*, 37
- Unnecessary words, 27
- Verbs: *advise*, 25, 30; *affect, effect*,
24; *beg*, 30; *blame on, to*, 26;
buy of, off, from, 26; *compare to*,
with, 27; confusion of contrac-
tions with possessive cases, 35,
36; *co-operate together*, 27; *differ*
from, with, 27; *go, come*, 27;
infinitives, 32; *leave, let*, 28; *lie*,
lay, 28; *lose, lose*, 24; *oblige*,
30; omission of, 30; participles,
33; participial ending, 11; *prac-*
tise, 25; *refer back*, 27; *return*
back, 27; sense, adjectives after,
38; *shall, will*, 31; *should, would*,
32; *should of*, 26; *take, bring*, 28;
tenses, 31
- Very, real*, 39
- Very, much*, 39
- Voice, change in, 19
- Well, good*, 38
- Who, whom*, 34
- Wish to*, 29
- With: differ with*, 26; *compare*
with, 26
- With, by*, 26
- Without, unless*, 37
- Words: colloquialisms, 28, 29;
confusion of prepositions, 25,
26, 27; conversational, 1, 29;
formal, 29; friendly, 29; homo-
nyms, 23, 24, 25; inaccurate,
27, 28; incorrect usage, 23-29;
omission of, 30; repetition, 23;
specific, 29; stereotyped, 29;
study of business magazines
and trade, 29; unnecessary, 27
- Would, should*, 32; misuse of, 32;
would of, 26; *would state*, 29
- Your, you're*, 36

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